

A SKETCH
OF
NEFIELD RAPIDS

OF
Connecticut River,

Past Present Future


Written & Printed

BY

Franklin J. Sheldon,

FEBRUARY 1915



		
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F. J. SHELDON,
PRINTER.
ENFIELD, CONNECTICUT.



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Dear Sir,

On returning home
from my visit to your house
of treasures, I looked over
my package of papers, and
am sending you a bundle
by this mail.

I have not seen Johnson.
but it does not matter, as
I have nearly a full list
to spare,

Very truly yours

F. J. Sheldon





A SKETCH
O F

ENFIELD RAPIDS

O F

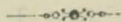
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INTRODUCTION

It was very pleasant for me, to listen to Grandfathers stories, as for the first twelve years of my existance I lived under the same roof, he learned me to fish, to handle a boat, and when we left the RIVER, Grandparents also bought a cottage near by, and moved at the same time to Enfield Street; I often was with them nights until the death of Grandfather.

During this time I became much interested in the family history of the Abbeys and followed the Able Gcrealogy, as far back as I could by their aid; I was encouraged by them to record some of these memories, about this time I bought a small printing outfit, and my first work



was printing a little memoir of my Aunt Elizabeth, the youngest sister of my Mother who died at the interesting age of twenty. Grandmother gave me most of the history,

This little printed pamphlet pleased my Grandparents and I always liked to try my hand at printing, and when opportunity offered, I would visit printing establishments and was much interested in the work, but I discovered soon that I made too many mistakes in spelling to be expert with type and after a year, I sold my printing outfit, refusing an offer of partnership with F. P. Parsons of the Thompsonville Press.

A few years ago, I bought a type-writing machine, and among other ways, in order

to get more practise on it, I took up the work of making a copy of this little book, that it might be given to my Grand children, when I should have passed along.

At this time I had no intention of printing it again, but after two years, in 1914 I came across a printing outfit, and not being able to do much field work, I purchased it, and you have the result before you,

My age is 63 1-2, my spelling may be bad; punctuation poor, print imperfect, but the pictures are those that will soon be among the views of past history, in this way I do attempt to preserve a milestone that will be cherished by some family, who may compare Enfield Rapids, 50
 YEARS LATER. 

ONE YEAR LATER

company Elizabeth Rapin, 50
the same family, who may
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Illustrations

The Editor going to the Agricultural Fair, Oct. 1914, with his Company of Flag-Drill Children. Frontispiece.

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T H E
CONNECTICUT RIVER
PAST & PRESENT & FUTURE.

How far back shall the thoughts of the past, induce the minds of the present to pay attention. as we sit upon the bank of this grand old river, noting the many ways in which it has been harnessed to serve the labor and capital of this present day.

What has its banks to say of the past? Its rock beds have been examined, and many a specimen of early life tracks have been found that were made before the Indian discovered its fertile surroundings: When you and our friends look upon its

winding course from the lofty hills of Mount Tom and Holyoke, there must come to the mind, of the wonderful struggle of the hills when the great gash was made in the early times, that took great rocks down the valley, and left them in places a hundred feet above the present high water mark. with no stone of the like perhaps within many miles around, thus the study of the present high water mark is tame in its make up compared with the great waters extending from mountain to mountain sixteen miles wide; But the school boy with his hook and line of to day, would say, that must have been about the time of Noah and the ark, what cares the boy? if the

fish wont bite; But little boy
get under a tree and keep
cool, or raise an umbrella
while you think again of the
number of boys who have
grown old fishing in this
same stream.

The first of human tracks
are of the Indian boy, and
you can be sure that like
other boys, this was a delight
ful place for him; The floods
of the early ages have left the
soil between these mountains
very fertile, the wild animals
and birds are in full possession

of the feeding grounds, thus
there is plenty of meat for
the home use, not forgetting
this great river, with it's sup-
ply of big fish and the small
streams, full of little fry;

What does this boy do?
all that he thinks.

happy his life, and with hunting and fishing, building a home for the one he loves fighting for his rights, he grows up and old, and in his primitive way has made his mark along the river.

What do we find at the Present day to place beside the bird tracks of ages gone, to remind us of the INDIAN Boy? That is not hard to answer, the finely finished arrow heads that are less liable to perish than the hills about, as we stop to examine this piece of work, then think of the time and patience to make them, what for all this work? To protect their home, to feed their families, and the RIVER flows quietly by.

To humanity along its banks it is doing good ser-

vice by the supply of fish, it's carrying the canoe from point to point, and its fitness for quenching thirst, also for bathing purposes: No bridge or dam, to check it's progress to the sea. Thus it was discovered by men and boys from across the ocean, who with a desire for more freedom and breathing room for their intellect, being perhaps venturesome, with the love of excitement, or a practical trader, looking for new fields of business possibilities. also a man with strong convictions that his religious belief was between him and and his God, and not to be made in the mould and dust of ancient thought, being devoted to forms, minus the thought of present needs.

All these and other active

minds, find the river is to be a help to their enjoyment, their boats begin to occupy the same priviledges that the canoe is having, and find the river a source of food as well as trafic; Now all this new life begins it's action of finding out what this stream may do toward furthering each varied mind with the employment it came for.

The venturesome young impulsive man with several of his friends, begins by trying to discover how far up into the wild country it is possible to go; and in the search, it is found that the body of water was over four hundred miles long, also that a large part of this distance could carry boats with merchandise; That along the

banks was fertile grounds, with plenty of timber and game, also that the INDIAN was a natural born hunter, who would trade furs, and feed, and lands, for fancy articles or guns and powder,

Thus the trader takes the place of the discoverer, and soon the INDIAN and trader are friendly; Thus the RIVER becomes lively with merchandise, and while the trading is friendly, also the trader finds that the land could be made to produce more freight, if a few homes of planters, or merchants could be established along the banks of this stream:

This view of the situation was presented to the INDIAN, and he thinking it get him more gun, and plenty powder

also other luxuries, with permanent traders for the surplus furs, which were not in their own camp required:

The INDIAN, enters into contract with the friendly trader to sell large tracts of river land, to be used as homes of the new ingenious white man, who was willing to build a log hut, and remain in the place summer and winter; thus giving the INDIAN a sure center for his exchange, little thinking that soon the white man would be bringing his friends to help catch game, and fish, also monopolize eventually the trading along the banks: A little reserve was made by the INDIANS on these places, which is claimed to hold good to this time. That any true INDIAN of local

tribe, could cut walnut and oak trees on this property sold to the traider, when it was to be used for basket making: And the white boy fishes in this great RIVER from this time, to be amused or help furnish the table fare

The home builder with his many acres of good land to cultivate, soon decides that beside this beautiful RIVER he will stay: Here his belief in RELIGION will be unquestioned, and the right to worship as he thinks proper.

Soon the School and the Church is found a place on a hill, where they can attract the attention of all, thus declaring their belief in GOD and EDUCATION. The fisher boy must find time to leave the bank. to climb the hill

to reverence and knowledge;
Thus the thoughts, of Govern-
ment, and the establishment
of a township were consider-
ed, and soon organized; Are
we going a little and smother
and getting away from the
bank of the RIVER, where all
of the boys of the past and
present love to tarry? It is
spring time, the grass in the
meadows is just starting to
grow, since the high water
with immense fields of ice
have been subdued by the
warm sun, or passed along
to the OCEAN, to be salted
and shattered by those great
restless waves.

Hello Tom! look at this!
What's on your line now, Jack
a sturgeon or only another
of those silver eels? (Tom is
down the bank, behind those

bushes, near the mouth of a lively brook, with a box of worms, a black birch pole, a good strong line, also one of the latest hooks, made somewhere across the great ocean, and he is very busy bringing to shore some fine fish.) Well! I say Tom cant you stop pulling in those fish long enough to tell me, what this is that's coming down the river? Jack I cannot see it from here, what does it look like? a log? a canoe? or a block of ice?

None of them, Tom, it looks to me like Grandpa's old hen house, and now I see it is on top of a lot of logs.

Well I say Jack, that is one of those log rafts, sure as you live: there's some people on it, I saw a woman come

out of the shed just now, she has gone in again, it looks as if they were living there, yes Tom! there is smoke coming out of that old stove-pipe just at the rear.

Well I say Jack, they are rushing the season with them logs, but come to think, I heard Grandpa say the other day, that the mill at Hartford was in want of a supply of logs, and he said, that if they sent them down the river loose, as is the practise in the summer time, they would have to look for them in the Ocean: This lot will be hauled in shore at the Hartford c v., and every log will be secured for the sawmill.

It is time we were getting the cows home, Tom; I see the fish are jumping in the

brook making it hard for us to leave just now, and Grandpa (who is an expert fisherman,) always says, sunrise and sunset, is the time for the best catch with the line.

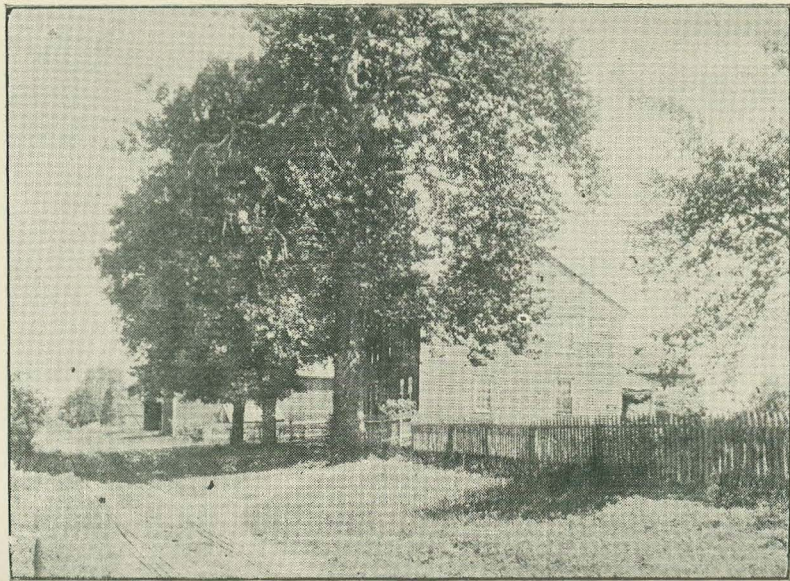
But Father said to have the chores done early to night, as there might be a chance of having a little fun with the drag net before bed time. On our way home with the cows a neighbor hailed us, Hey there boys!

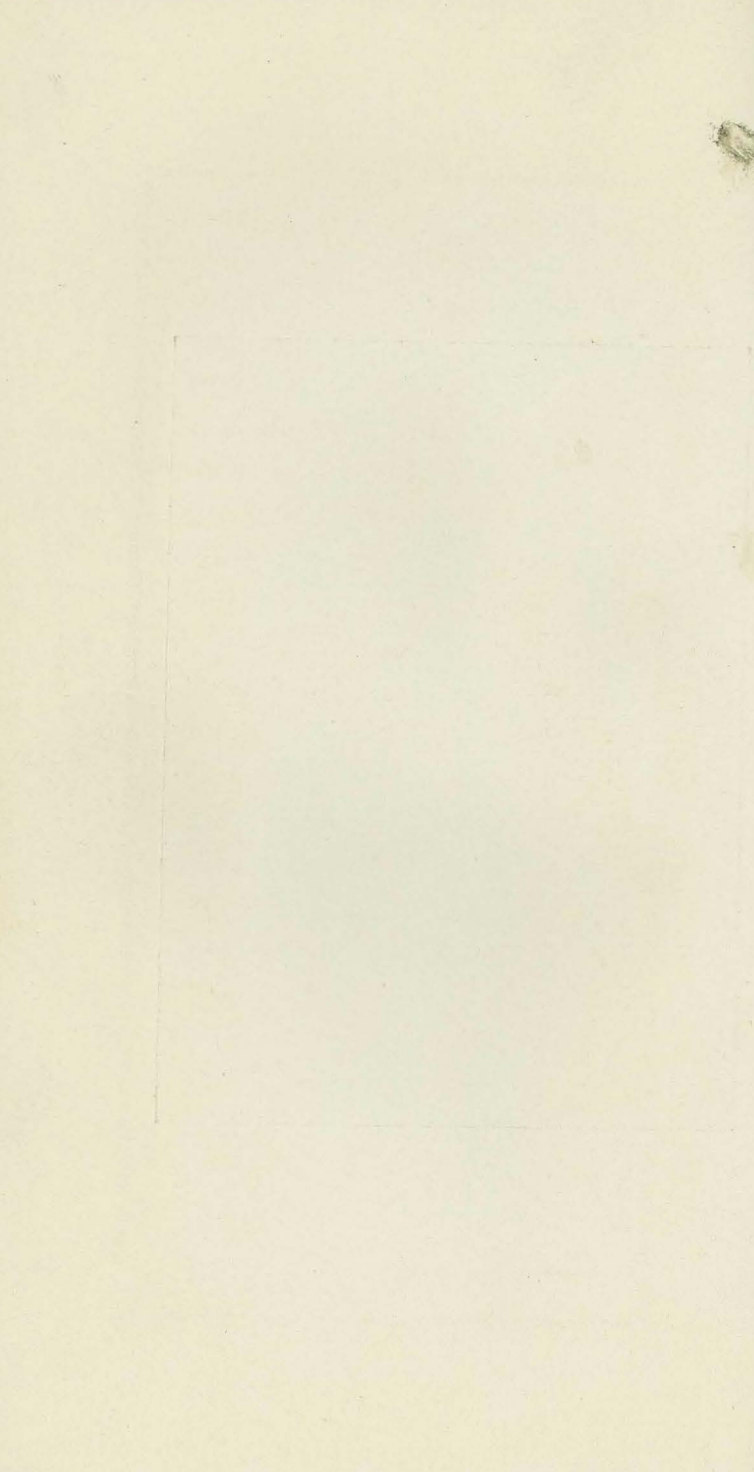
did you leave any fish in the brook? I see you have a nice catch. We did. and if you think we got them all, just go over there and hear those we did not catch sporting in the water they act as if they were fighting for more room (and this is no enlarged story the writer has seen this same

stream so full of fishes that a man waded in, caught them in his hands, threw them on the shore.)

The brook was cleaned of all brush & stones during the low water of the past summer. this work prepared the brook for the hauling of the long net in the spring.

The neighbor was part owner in this net, he said to the boys " Your folks said we'd drop in the long net some evening when there was a good school of fish going up the brook, your Pa said that he'd blow the fish horn when we were to make a haul. I've got an idea neighbor Jones, if you dont loose your hearing you'll get the sigaal right after supper Grandpa has been watching





the brook, and he says, [the chance of a big run of fish if the weather continues mild.

Nell, here's that string of fish for breakfast, that you said Jack and I was too lazy to catch; Hold on Tom! who do you think is going to clean those fish? and we expecting some people from town street here this evening.

Well you dear girl you been keeping this news from us boys all day, I see now why you wanted us to go fishing, while you made pies and doughnuts. I suppose Charley is coming too? keep your blushes: Jack you put them fish in the washtub we'll have to hustle with the chores. Pa not home yet, where has he gone Nell?

Well boys, Mother said,

he would go up to the store and tell the folks to come down this evening, and help catch their own fish, if they wanted any. Father thinks there is prospects of a good haul this evening, and he is too buisy with the spring work, to spend tomorrow distributing fish; beside he will stop at the store, to see if any eggs butter or cheese is to be shipped to Hartford by the next boat. he said, a boat would soon be up to the Distillery Landing, the ice having left the river. and the south winds will bring the boats up lively now.

The Gin is all ready to go and so is the Pork, the Store is getting short of Molasses and tea, have been awaiting the boat for a week or more,

with orders laying at Hartford in anticipation of water transportation.

The evening is fine, soon from up the hill is heard the rumble of the old ox wagon and the Doctor's sulkey, followed by a lively group of young people, who don't mind a little walk of a mile or two, if there is prospects of some fun at the other end; In due time they all assemble at the fisherman's home, receiving a warm welcome by the fisherman's family, the hired man, receiving as welcome greeting as the Doctor.

The Horn, which calls to meals, signals a passing boat or gives the alarm when help is wanted, each call being arranged and understood by the neighbors, is now order-

ed to be blown, for the neighbor fishermen to assemble, to take a hand in making a haul, these men of the RIVER-BANK under the influence of Cap. Abbey, (our Grandpa,) have by work, or money, become partners in boat, and nets, helping to keep the grounds cleared, so that the hauls may be made without harm to the net. Each boatman has his place. one to row the boat, another to cast the net, and others to care for the line on shore: all very important to the best filling of the net;

This seems strange to the people living far back from the RIVER. But once having the pleasure of attending a gathering of this kind, it will always remain fresh in your mind. The people assemble

on the bank of the brook: the old fisherman who everybody calls Grandpa, takes command, going among the assembly, saying, (just keep still where you are, and dont move until the net is set;)

The oarsman now takes his place quietly in the boat the cast off man now takes his position before the net, which is carefully piled on the rear deck of the boat: to his right hand the net has a supply of sinkers, of lead, to hold this part of the net at the bottom of the stream; at the left hand on the net is a supply of corks, or floats, as they are often called; to hold this part of the net on top of the water: There is a line fastened to this net, for the shore man to hold; the boat

is pulled away from the shore, the line man holds on and the net is being carefully let off as the boatman pulls across to the opposite shore.

The spectators watch this preceeding with much interest until the fish begin to sport on top the water, now you can tell who of the party is excited, as it is difficult for them to keep quiet, it's the young people who commence running along the shore shouting, Did you see see that fish jump right out there Grandpa? and Grandpa is saying, (hold on a minute now, and you will have a chance to hold him.)

The boat is being carefully taken to a point near the river, now it swings across the brook the net will keep

the fish from getting back to the RIVER, thus the trap is set and advanced up the stream on the opposite bank from the place where the spectators are waiting: the last hauling line is now cast off, the end being brought by boatman quickly to the landing shore he passes the line to one of the shore men, and pulls his boat away, to give a clear sweep for the net at the landing. Now Grandpa says, all you boys who want to make a noise, bring some sticks and stones. come with me: and off they go up the brook around the bend some thousand feet away; Now boys, give it to them hot!, throw the dirt and stones, thrash the water lively, making the fish think the RIVER is the

safest place for them, they will be going that way in a hurry, and we must get there soon with these stray fish we are driving. as when they find the fence they will try to pass us and escape up the stream

Here we are. the noise has been made, the shore men are drawing the net across to form the pocket, into which we have been driving them.

Now both ends of the net are in the hands of the shore men, Grandpa is warning them to haul carefully on the lead lines, do not hurry the cork line: at each end of the net two men are needed to make a successful haul.

Soon the crowd shout, as the fish begin to make the water boil, and the men for fear the fish will break the

net, jump into the water and throw some on the bank,

The haul was not all elwhops as of the present possible catch, there was a few small shad, some fine pearch a few beautiful pickerel, and a good batch of suckers, thus a variety of tastes were having their treat.

The lantern was brought, and as soon as the lead line was in shore the men had the cork line well in hand everybody was invited to take hold of the net and with a rousing cheer the net was brought with it's splashing load of RIVER food high upon the bank. The fishermen now gathered about the net, counted the number caught, and then the visitors were given all they wanted for family

The net was spread out to dry and the jolly crowd went back to our house, to find Sister Nell and her friend Charlie, ready with doughnuts, cheese, and cider.

Of course this being a fishing party; the elaborate ball room dress and dance was not included. As the old hall clock struck ten, the groups and loads of happy neighbors say their pleasant "Good-night, and moving away from the hospital RIVER HOME, to the high land of Enfield St. feeling that there was many a good fish left for the next party who a fishing went.

It may seem out of good taste to go backward in this little book, but in making a grouping of these events, I had thought of only writing

the single copy, to be given to my grandchildren when they get old enough to be interested in the early settlement of this town by their Abbey or Abbe ancestors.

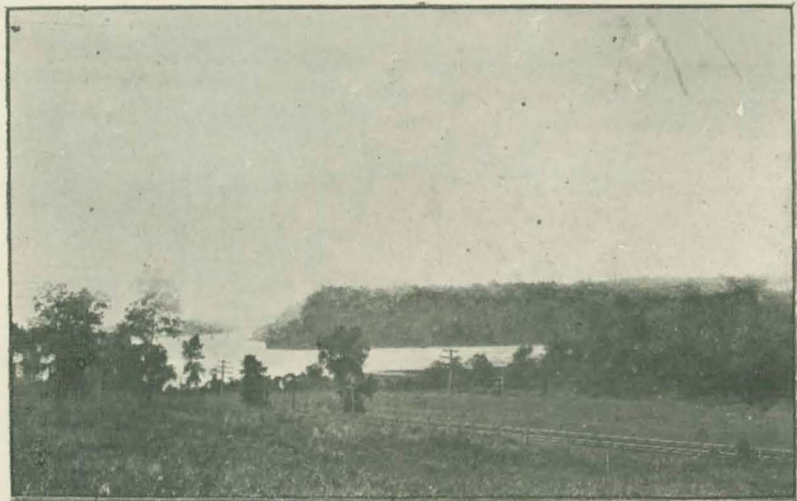
The story just told, of the fishing, is nearly seventy years old when I write it from memory,

Now I am preparing to go back to the interesting days of Grandpa's childhood as he told them to me.

By town and other record we are informed that the Abbe family settled in this town, 1682 the name was Thomas; in course of time a son John took the fathers place in the affairs of town, also rearing a fine group of children; the youngest, who was named Richard, and he

was my Grandpa's Grandpa which we are to intrduce at this time.

An aged man stands on his farm, a high bank overlooking the lower rapids of the RIVER and by his side are Richard and Roswel, (the twins,) his grandchild- ren. who always are glad to be in his company. the old man this beautiful afternoon has made upon the boys a lifetime impression, he tells them of the news he received from the N. Y. & B. Stage brought sturring news from down the RIVER, for the old boatman: It was reported in the vicinity of Hartford that there was a small steamer going up the RIVER, and to force it's way through the rapids.



This old man, who owned large tract of land along the east side of these rapids; was out on the hill that overlook the lower rapids, awaiting the arrival of the wonderful little steamer, and the old man to the boys at his side,

"He would be willing to die, if he could live to see a boat with smoke and steam get up past those rapids."

He had in his day taken a hand in the work of pushing many a boat load of freight up over this raceway among the rocks, and it was part of the employment of his sons at this time; and well he knew how many men must line up on each side, using long polls, a sharp pike to take hold of the ridges on a rock, the other end of the

pole was placed at the shoulder. it taking six or eight men on each side to keep an advance on up the RIVER over these rapids; These men go by the name of Pilots or Polers, living near the rapids, holding themselves in readiness to respond to the call promptly, going by a beaten path along the bank (it is said by some, to be the same as the railroad now follows from Thompsonville to Warehouse Point.) this work was of the summer traffic when the rock prohibited the use of the sail

Taking charge of boat, in true military order, their Cap. takes the helm, the polers four or six on each side, at regular distance apart place their pikes in the water and at command, they march to

the rear, each returning to the bow with pole on shoulder passing along inside and so the march keeps up until the rapids are passed, they must take to the toe path and back to the lower falls, or to their homes, thus the merchandise was pushed up the RIVER, to Springfield Holyoke Greenfield, and was called a good navigable stream; is it to be wondered at, that the old man was a bit sceptical, in his remarks to the boys

He believed that the work of the hardy rivermen would not be destroyed by any device of the paddlewheel:

The workingmen had heard from some of the men, that this steamer was going to do their work, and the monster was in the line of an enemy,

not a helper. what would be left for them to do?, the old question always arising, in advance of any new laborsaving device. but what is the actual result.? the more improvements, the more work is presented to be done.

The boatmen have horses and there are times when it is necessar to transfer boat loads to wagons. thus carried around the rapids where up river boat receives the cargo and concludes the journey.

And so they make good cheer, looking the arrival of this labor annihilator

While we have been look-over the work worry of the boatmen, the twins and the old man have been watching for that steamer; and it's to be seen in the distance, ad-

vancing to the work of conquering the rapids. and all expectant, the old man and boys watch it aproach the rapids; It was a most interesting struggle of hot water against cold, of swift revolving paddlewheels against a swifter run of water; There was amusement for the watching party on the bank, as several times the boat had to drop back, and try again.

The steamer master had to give up the fight, and return to Hartford: "As afterwards reported," confidant his boat would conquer at another trial. and it did, we have abundant proof.

Grandpa and the boys go home, with the idea that the RIVER could not be conquered, and expressing much sur-

prised that anybody should think such a feat possible.

But as in the past so it is at present and probable for the future; that the impossible becomes a useful and a necessary element to the age of progress; The steamer did go up the river; The old man saw it, and declared it a wonderful performance.

This comes to you, not as a rumor, but as told to the writer, by one of the twins:

In these memories which will be told in this sketch, a lot of the landmarks are not to be found, the plot of burial, where the old man laid at rest, cannot be located, but Town Records gives a portion of his active life.

With the passage of the steamer, the up river devel-

opement expanded, and the freighting increased.

To bridge this GREAT RIVER, was much talked enterprise, flat ferryboats with an old boatman, his home and garden patch near the landing, is expected to hear your call of over, and after a time which to the waiting patron unnecessary long would release the boat, take your silver and pole you to the other side, thus the necessity of a bridge, to hasten travel was among the problems to be solved, the ferryman didn't worry about the bridge taking his livelihood, in the first place, where could money be secured to build,? and in the second part, if built, who was better located to secure the position of toll collector?

Before we leave the primitive times too far in the background, it might be well to mention that some fear of the Indians was shown, but no serious trouble was recorded. A barrack was constructed as place of refuge for the early settlers of this town: it was located on the east side of Enfield Street at the south end, a building of considerable size was built on an elevation, a fence of big timbers was placed around this house, including a small stream of water, a good well and two acres of land:

In my school days this plot was known as Aunt Susie Booth's pond, well, and pear tree, the fruit appealed to us the most; The old woman had in her possession for some

time a piece of window from the old barrack, it was finally placed in the Museum in Springfield, Mass.

The next important RIVER event, was construction of a canal, extending for four miles, on the west side of the river, again the mind of the rivermen is disturbed; The pilots that have spent much time familiarizing themselves with the location of each obstruction, the best channel to use and were making a honest living guiding the steambot and other craft past the danger: now this plan of go around was to do away with their profession.

The canal has been another help to the development of the RIVER; it was soon found to be very useful, as a power to

to turn the wheels of machinery, by which much more of the money which the riverman felt was to be taken out of his reach, developed more work and money, building up the settlement of Windsor Locks.

About this time there was a proposition made in which Enfield men were consulted as to their approval; It was regarding the establishment by the U. S. Government, of the armory in this town, the armory to be located on the site where now stands the grand old mansion, built by Orin Thompson, the so called water shops, were to be located on Kings Island.

What did the people do,?

In the interest of the good morals of the future inhabit-

ance, they did object to this proposition; to day Enfield is not the city it might have been, but the morals, have they paid the sacrifice?.

Have I lost track of the lively little vilage by the RIVER bank,? No. And perhaps a little may be told of what has been the manufacturing efforts: The largest plant, a distillery, with a grist mill a saw mill, and a cooper shop all of which the (twins) and their father were owners and workers. there was a dam up the brook, and it farnished power for the grist mill and a shop on the other side of the stream, where beaver hats were made. This before the building of Enfield Bridge.

Most of the heavy timber at this time were hewn in the

woods, but the millwork was required in the production of boards and shingle; and you may be pleased to notice, all of the manufactured work is boated to markets down the RIVER. In return, a variety of good housekeeping material was secured.

As the Island is nearly associated with this community, we will include it's early usefulness: It being the largest island of this river, it is mentioned on maps as Kings Island, and for a long time Bial King and his family, of Suffield, owned the largest portion; The Abbey's also held some land, and although these families were separated by the RIVER, in many ways they were the best of neighbors. The wood of the Island

was brought home during the winter, the King family and Abbey's were on the alert as soon as the ice stopped the ferryboat, an ice bridge was soon formed, by cutting a big cake of ice along the open water, up stream from where the bridge was to be crossed a socket was cut at the down stream end, all being ready, the upper end of this cake of ice is carefully pushed out toward the other bank, care being taken that the socket holds, a shoulder is made to receive the floating cake on the opposite side, if the cake does not break when it gets to the shoulder the work is done and one cold night and the crossing is safe the ferry road is open to travel, and King, and Abbey make for

the woodlot on the Island;

King's teams come across the ice bridge to this side of the RIVER, and along to what the boatmen name (DEEPHOLE) this place is opposite the center of the Island, the current is not swift here, the ice has completed a safe crossing for the wood teams, and for several weeks this opportunity may last and the ferryman not getting toll unless he can chop wood.

Many a friendly visit across the ice on pleasant evenings are arranged.

Between the Island and the Suffield shore a mill dam was built, and it was a good place for fishing.

One of Grandpa's fireside stories about this dam, may be told at this time.

We had gathered around the hearth one cold evening the log was burning bright, a tallow candle is on a stand in a corner giving only the apology of light, on the table near the center of the room was the pitcher of cider and the pan of apples ready for a possible visitor who might drop in: It was my pleasure the first twelve years of my life to be under the same roof my home in the other part of the house, a dark hall separating us: I am permitted to spend the early evening if a visitor is not being entertained, I listen in the dark hall, and the coast being clear, I rap on the door to find out if I may be welcome, (this deference to older people at that time was more strictly

demanding than at present,) I get a kindly greeting and a place is made for me between them at the fireside.

Grandpa was smoking his pipe, while Grandma, who's workday was never long enough, made the knitting needles hum at that stocking yarn.

As Grandpa's stories were all river stories, and true, or Grandma would not have allowed him to have told them to me I am quite sure.

I will try to repeat as near as possible from memory a few of these stories.

Grandpa said, "That dam back of the Island was one of the good fishing places in the spring time, and noticing one day that some large fish were mounting over the dam some would let their tail out

loose their momentum, falling back to the base of the falls; I thought I would try to catch some of those fish, I got my scoop net, and boat above the dam, made anchorage secure, let out the cable until the end of the boat was hanging over the dam, when all was made fast, I went to the hanging over end with the net and soon had a chance to get my net under one of those fish. I caught several in this way, they were Salmon.'

Another story Grandpa would tell with much pleasure, was of his boyhood days when his father left the twins to hoe corn while the father went to town; how they kept busy for a time, but the RIVER was so near, they concluded

to have a swim, and be back at work before the father got home; The water was much more to our liking than the cornfield, the time passed so quickly that we were caught by our Father, who appeared without warning between us and our clothing. our condition was too much exposed, but concluded that we must take what was coming, so we swam to the shore, Father had not known before of our visits to the RIVER, thinking to scare us he caught us as we came in shore and cast us out into deep water, saying, "I'll teach you swimming."

We were surprised to learn this was to be our punishment, and we were so well pleased, that on getting to shore, we asked him to do it

again!, this convinced him we were to be rivermen, and he seemed well pleased, as no further punishment was given us at this time.

The twins have become active young men, and could handle stone work among the professionals of those days,

The plan for building a bridge across the RIVER to acomodate the increased travel across the country.

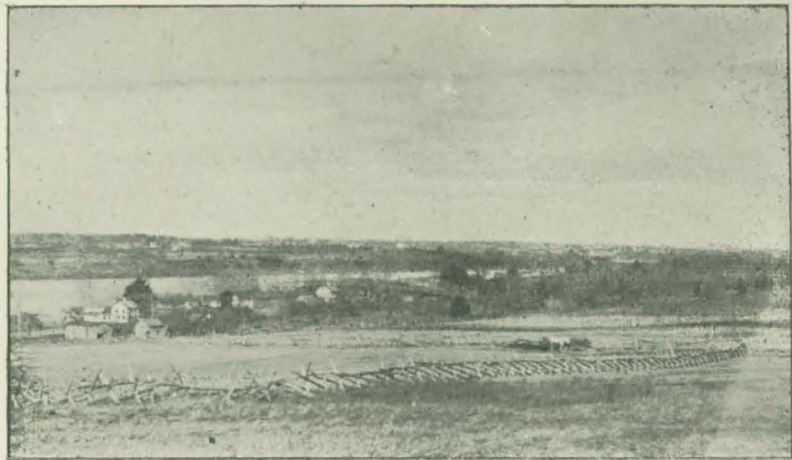
The twins secured the contract to construct the piers.

The work was completed by them only a short time before they came of age, and the payment for this work went to their Father: Grandpa said, "We boys felt very sorely that act of Fathers."

Building of Enfield Bridge was another seven days won-

der, was built of green timber, without covering, it was condemned after about eight years service; The piers did not give out, and soon another framework was put on: this time a roof was added, and many years did service

Another story Granpa was always ready to tell, was of a man that lived in the coopershop house and had a small garden beside the highway, He said, "I passed by this garden on my way to church one Sunday morning this man was hoeing near the road, I asked him if he would not feel better if he kept the Sabbath and went to church, he let me understand that my preaching was out of place, having my family with me, I made no further prote-



st. The next day the man to some of his friends, that he went in the garden to hear a sermon from the twins, he got good one from Richard, and as Roswell came by, I was expecting some more, a surprise, he did not appear to know I was there. he was about getting off, I called to him and asked why he did not give me a lecture about sunday work?. he turned and with a pleasant smile, said neighbor, you dont work on week days to break the Sabbath. He made no further comment, but I felt quite sure that he was on to my trick, and would tell on me if I did not tell it first.

The twins, as I have said before, were expert RIVERMEN and built their homes side

of the RIVER, at the mouth of Beemans Brook, (this place at present writing is owned by the CONNECTICUT RIVER Co. who are planning building a DAM across the RIVER below the rapids, large enough to put all of the village under water, that is of this story, the Illustrations of this book will with the brook be among the things of the past.)

I am not telling this story in the interest of Genealogy, but will refer to the fact that the twins are 6 in line of the ABBEY family, who are of the 1st John Abbey, of Wenham Mass. 1635 or 6, that came from England, in Ship Ben-iventure. 2 Thomas, came to Enfield, Ct. with his wife, Sarah Fairfield Abbey, of Wenham, Mass. 3 Thomas

born in Enfield, 1633, married Mary Pease, they were parents of 4th Thomas, the DRUMMER, a Monument is to be placed to his memory, in front of the First Congregational Church, by a Grandson of the 8th, Gen. Alden Freeman, East Orange, N.J. 3rd John born 1692. Uncle of the drummer, married Hannah Bowman, and the old man with the twins watching for the steamer, was born in 1735. 4th Richard, married Mary Bement, 1755.

5th Richard, born 1760, married Lydia Stevenson, who was mother of the twins, of whom this story is a part.

6th Richard, married Charlott Bement. my Grandparents. 6th Roswell, born 1787, married Sally Olmsted.

Both families were blessed with girls; Roswell had one son, 7th, Simeon, and two girls, Julia and Roxelena.

Richard's family as follows 7th Caroline, Charlotte, (my mother,) Harriet, and Elizabeth.

It used to be a saying in town, that whoever you hit it would be some of the Abbe family. It is not so at this time. I can tell of Roswell very little, he had the name of being a very pleasant man was injured while leading a wild heifer.

The next event to stir this settlement, was the Railroad between Hartford and Springfield. Again the twins had a hand at stone work, besides selling a long right of way.

Still the rivermen kept the

A MISTAKE of importance, on
page 50.

Roswell Abbey had another
Daughter called Salley.

Mrs. F. A. King, the widow of
Salley's oldest son called my atten-
tion to this, Am sending this to all who
have copies of my book. Enfield Rapids.



flat boats on the RIVER. have to lower the mast when passing under the railroad bridge and by anchor or poleing to get past; The boats are in use mostly carrying supplies for making powder, and as the powder was not allowed shipment except by boat or team, there was work left to this community yet. Many a boatman found our table, for a meal while the boat was at the landing unloading coal and taking on powder.

Another important building was four brick store houses for powder, near the old ferry landing, they would be filled in winter when roads were in good condition: The powder being made at Hazardville five miles east.

With the early fieshet the

store houses were emptied, the boats went down the river with their cargo of explosives; this neighborhood would breathe without fear once more.

To mention another industry of the past, it was the making of plows for Southern trade, the plow had a mouldboard of wood, covered with a heavy sheetiron;

There were three firms in town that had for some time built this plow, painted them red, and shipped by water:

I remember seeing the last shipment of plows, they were put on a little steamboat at the ferry landing, this was a few years before the war of the Rebellion.

I am getting into the present, but there is one more

of Grandpa's stories he liked to tell about his brother Charles. He said, "It was the custom in the early days to pay the Parson, with farm produce, Charles was about to deliver a load of wood, as he was pulling out of the yard, his wife asked him if he would inquire after the Parson's health, as she had been told he had been very sick. He put the wood in the Parson's shed but the Parson did not appear, as was his custom on such occasions, He waited around a while thinking how he should make the inquiry, when the good wife appeared at the door asking him if something was wanted. He told her of his wife's request,

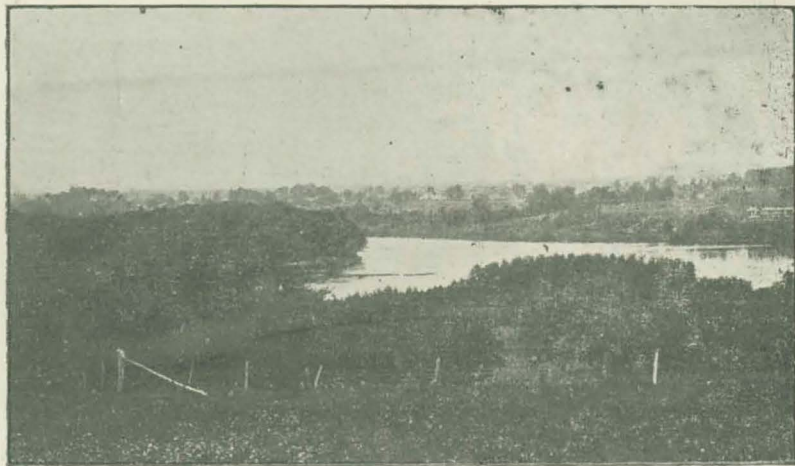
On his arrival home his wife

asked if he found out how the Parson was, He said, No I asked the good wife, and she said, he was convalescent. I did not know if I should be glad or sorry, and I got out out of the yard in quick time fearing to hurt her feelings.

I could get very little out of Grandpa about war, he had a flintlock musket beside his writing desk in his bedroom the most he would say, "I carried that thing to New London, a forced march in 1812. it was heavy."

I have mentioned the getting of wood from the Island and there was a way with a team during low water during a harvest season, this passage was possible from the Suffield side only.

I have watched the teams



come down the old ferry road cross over the canal to the toe path, follow this until a road down from the path led to the RIVER, in which a rock ledge is followed about east, until a little channel is crossed, then a ledge is found that goes south to the Island. I have watched many a load go over this ford, the only question of use seemed to be the fifty foot channel, if the water came in the wagon; it was no load this day.

The preparation for shad fishing is made during the summer, if any rock bothered the net during the fishing season, it was got out at this time: The shad net was kept at the brook. but the fishing grounds were behind the Island, and at the ferry land-

ing on the Suffield side, and Bial King was partner with the Abbey brothers.

I well remember of the success of one haul one pleasant June morning; Grandpa said to my father, "John it's a good morning for a haul

Father did not like to go, as he was busy with planting, Grandpa wanted to make one haul, promised to make only one; Father was not fond of fishing, but went because he did not wish to be disagreeable. I was not old enough to help, Grandpa never took passengers; I remained on the bank, saw the net loaded on boat and watched them cross the RIVER. Mr. King saw them coming, met them at the landing, the net was in the water very soon and now

the net was hauled in shore and I could see the fish tossed on the bank. I ran home to tell Mother that Grandpa got the fish.

When the fishing party returned, Grandpa was a well pleased fisherman, and Father said no more about the planting this morning. that one haul gave the party over one hundred fine shad.

The rest of the morning was given by the whole family to dressing fish preparatory for salting down.

As I remember that work I often think of the lot of spawn, which is so highly prized now, was that morning given to the poultry.

The great freshet that carried off the bridge across the brook, and got a num-

ber of openings in the canal bank, gave Grandpa much anxiety about some cordwood on the Island, he was afraid the water would carry it off:

He told Grandma that he was going to the Island, she begged of him not to go, and Mother did some pleading too, but having made up his mind, he went. we watched the little boat diving among the waves. Grandpa saved the wood, but was it the prayers of the women on the bank that gave him safe return?

Another never forgotten excursion I had with Grandpa. was to my Uncle Ephraim Potter's store; I always had the idea that what he would do was all right; this afternoon I was with him in the store; Grandpa was a tobacco

user and there was in those days a kind of black plug that came in a block, was cut off with chisel or knife sold by the ounce or pound as may be desired; this block was kept in a back room in which was to be found molasses, soap a ben of coarse salt barrels of flour, pork, mackerel, and on top of an empty barrel was the tobacco that Grandpa and I found while looking over the stock.

Grandpa took a knife and cut off a piece of the tobacco put it in his mouth and as he went out smacked his lips as if he had found something good, I saw a small bit left beside the knife, I took it and tried to get the desire to smack, but it did not come as I expected, so I swallowed

the stuff. I soon went to the house to find my mother, it is not necessary to say more. I never found out if Grandpa smiled.

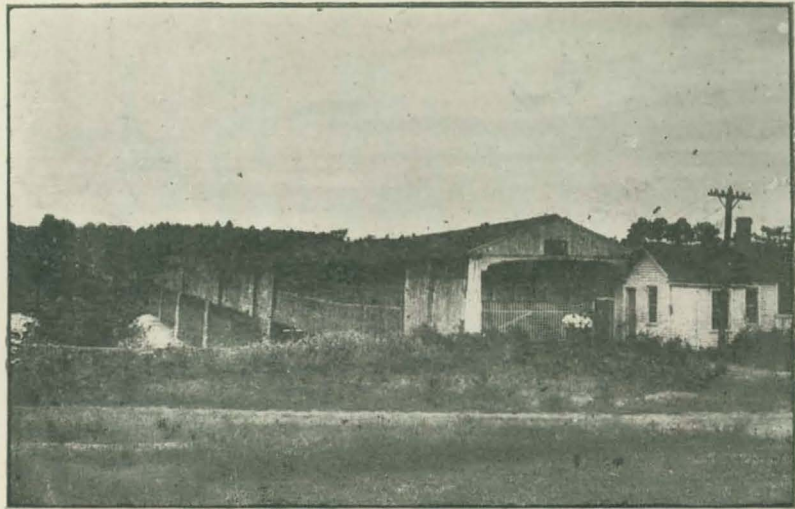
ENFIELD BRIDGE that was in it's time an important piece of property, owned by Senator James Dixon. who came in possession through a Lottery scheme by which the funds were secured This property remained in this family nearly one hundred years, for a long time it controlled all bridge rights between Hartford and Springfield; The Railroad Co. paid to this owner, The bridges at Warehouse Point, and Thompsonville, had to contribute, before they could locate. This structure was often loaded to its limit, and all

went safely, The toll keepers were not inclined to stay many years as it was a lonesome place at night, but in the daytime there was plenty of people passing.

I have made note of the building of the piers, now I will note some of the caretakers as I remember them, not the first, but in my early days Mr. Alexander was the tenant and it was there I saw the first carpet loom at work he made rag carpets for the farmers wives who could get the rag sewed into strips or balls, as they used to call them. The man that took his place was Heman Smith and a cobblers bench was set up where you could get the shoe mended or a new pair you was not in a hurry for

them. Until now the trains were asked to take on the would be traveler, by shaking a danger signal at the Engineer, The increase in patronage from this station made it necessary to build a ticket office and a young capable man was to fill this office. A. H. Potter an active young man from Willington, Conn. had just married one of the girls of our town, and offered to take the place: his application was accepted, and for number of years was the agent for Bridge and Station he had a family of three girls when an opportunity to get small farm, influenced him to get a permanent home in more pleasant surroundings.

Another young man and family, Harvey Prior, took up



the work, He was by trade a cigar maker, and applied his odd moments in this way; his girl and boy being old enough to attend school, his wife did help him by taking toll, and preparing the tobacco, they had a good cigar trade at the door It is with regret I must relate that he began to use too much intoxicating drink, becoming very gloomy, and causing great anxiety to his family; the climax came one Sunday morning, when word came from the family, for a Dr. that he had shot himself in his bedroom. Two Dr's were soon in attendance. it was a shot for the brain, he died about midday without consciousness being restored.

Again there is a vacancy,

the saddest yet, as he was a capable and obliging man.

It was a question, where was the family that would be willing to occupy this place?

Hosea Keach had been connected with railroad work for some time, and having a boy old enough to help him do a part of the bridge work arranged to come first train morning from Warehouse Pt, where his family had a home returning home on the seven evening train, this was approved by the R. R. Co. and the Bridge Co. had to agree as at this time the bridge was getting worn and old, the income being reduced, because of the more convenient crossings at Thompsonville and Warehouse Point. It being impossible to pay a tender

wages and make necessary repairs out of toll receipts.

The family finally concluded that it would be better to occupy the house, as it would be more convenient to the whole family, not long after this, it was though prudent to close the bridge to travelers, the piers and flooring were declared unsafe, no one felt the money would be from tolls returned; many a patron was sorry to see the old gate close: but in the time of high water the piers were badly weakened by the ice, and the R. R. Co. during the freshet of Feb. 1900 requested their agent, Mr. K. to keep sharp watch on the weakning of the piers, and report, Keach had been making frequent trips out to a

8

pier near the center. and on the 15th of Feb. about two o'clock, P. M. he made one trip that nearly cost him his life. He tells the incident in as simple a manner as possible, He had felt special need of watchfulness, and as the train south was about due, he hastened out on the bridge, once more that he might report to the Co. The trip to the pier was made, he felt that the R. R. Co. should be told at once he got within a few feet of the gate when he was being carried into the roof by the floor rising, for several minutes there was no telling of what happened, but when consciousness returned, he found that he was on the cross pieces near the east gable.

He also became concious

that the bridge was moving with the flood, as he found that he was all there, he began to feel the necessity of getting where he could see if his craft was far from shore he tried knocking out some of the gabble boards, and he found them too firm to move with his hands, he could see very little of the mass around him but his hand came in contact with a piece of loose timber which he found how to send a blow that opened a hole large enough to give him a place to crawl out to the top of the wreck, found that he was passing the Island and rapidly being carried toward the R. R. Bridge the property which the Co. was anxious about and he was to give the warning, as he ap-

proached the bridge he saw that an effort was being made to save him, a rope with loop was placed as near where he was to pass, the time for action came, a shout "GET INTO THE LOOP." I did as ordered and am here safe and sound to tell the story, and attend to the office work before five o'clock.

His wife and family did not know of the danger until his return.

The train people informed the Warehouse Point people who helped at the rescue.

Why we moved from our home by the RIVER?

Mother made many sacrifices, working hard to get away from the RIVER. and as soon as a piece of property within her means was offered

Mother had it bargained for she said that she was glad to get away from the water, and one time she told us, that as all children like playing in dangerous places. she kept up the record until one day into the brook she went between two flat grain boats, and if a man had not seen her fall off, she would not have lived to tell the story, as the boats were side by side, and as she stepped from one to the other they separated, and let her into the water, when she went down the boats came together, but a man happened to see her, and pushed the boats apart in time to save her life.

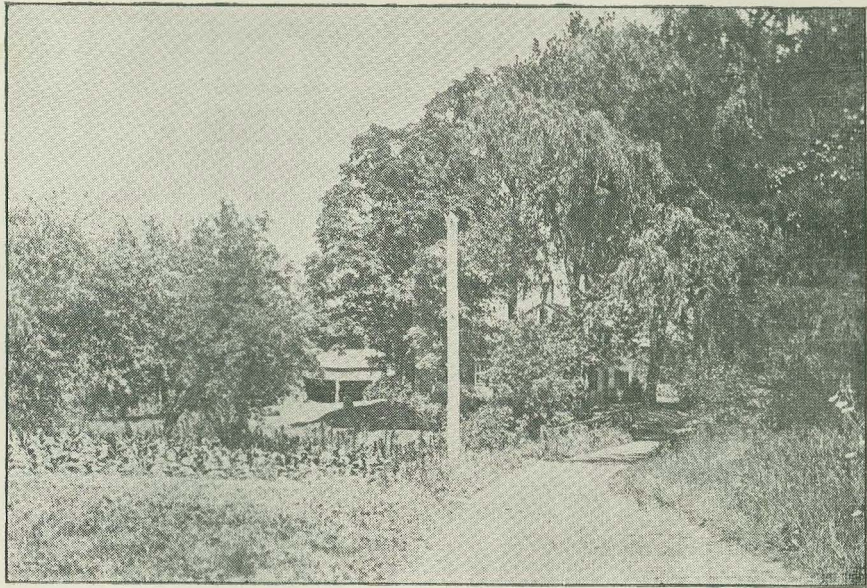
Mother got her dislike for the RIVER from that time.

Are we arrived to the time

when we are ready to say that the RIVER has lost its usefulness?. Not at all. The RIVER does no groaning, there are times when it may be said to roar, again it has its days of gentle murmuring. It is a working stream just the same

The steam road has taken away temporally the transportation, and we find that it is a power of great value to many an industry, many wheels are being forced to set machinery at work, making clothing, paper, and machinery, this being accomplished at the lower part of the canal, supplying employment for hundreds of laborers as may be seen when a visit is made to Windsor Locks.

Present. What regard do the men of to day pay to the



faithful helper of the past?

All up and down the stream were forest, Indian camps, and the sweet running water.

What has the brave white man done in appreciation of this great waterway?

Established Cities of factories, using it for pleasure, power, and it may be said that transportation is not entirely forgot.

It is pleasant to think of what it has done for us, but has the present users been gaining honor to themselves by using this RIVER for a sewer.

Is it a pleasant measure to consider, that its power remains, but could it speak, is there not something it would mention as a great wrong has been done a faithful servant?

Where are the splendid fish? gone because of too many willing hands that are catching them? Oh no, says the RIVER, that is not the trouble: But those men who have been made rich with my help have robbed me of my cleanliness, thus while they have become rich, thir faithful friend grows poor; Why?

The fish cannot live in the poisonous wastings of your factory. Is it your right to injure the noble RIVER in this way?

From every little stream that helps to raise the little fish comes a supply of filth that does discourage the bravest family of fish.

If the boy of the present with fancy pole, nickel plated reel, fine silk line, patent

fish hook and fancy basket, sets on the bank and wonders why he cannot catch the fish like Grandpa used to do, will try to remember that days fishing when he become a law maker in this country, and will say to every factory and all other sewer systems, Cremate, CREMATE, CREM--ATE, your poisonous waste, and give back to the RIVER and its branches the possibility of cleanliness, thus making it possible for the fishes to occupy and furnish food for many a home, as in the good days of our ancestors.

Thus while we write, we get a thought for the future, almost without knowing it,

It may be unwise to trespass upon the problems of this wise generation to be,

In writing the title, who could leave the RIVER in its present neglected condition without a word of regret and a hope that there may be a speedy reformation.

Looking backward from our present as we have been doing; It is only reasonable to suppose that the improvements of the future will be as remarkable, and perhaps with less of the wasteful way of the past: As will be seen, the people that came to the RIVER bank, let nature in a large measure provide for their wants; The present time indicates that the future must be one of larger thought in order to produce the best results from that which nature has supplied; The RIVER will be purified, the water will

be harnessed, for its power, by construction of such dam as will hold the power for the most general service of the greater number. If this is not taken into account, and the few chose to enrich their surroundings regardless of the majority, soon it will call ruin down upon all their castle building, but if the lines are for the comfort and good cheer of the greater number: then will the improvements continue, and good times be expected along the river.

The present, is introducing to us the wonderful transportation of power, what has that to do with the future?

The canoe, steamboat, and steamcar, already are among the antiquities, and yet they point to the possible future.

Who will stand out boldly and say that progress is at an end? Oh no! every new thinking mind is studying to devise some way that shall be of use, and have a charm in its creation,

The Electric transportation seems to be more far-reaching than the RIVER, in its possibilities of furnishing power, as it can be carried many miles back into the country where it was thought the RIVER never would be of any help, but the RIVER is to have a hand in this, it will show the world that it belongs yet in the perpetual motion class, and can furnish the electric wave when properly harnessed. that in many ways bring comfort and prosperity to the people of New-

England, the power so developed will be used to take the place of coal and wood that is becoming scarce and expensive.

The great power will be looked after to its full extent not forgetting the little stream thus finding the means of furnishing all that is done by coal, and in a cleaner way.

Already the effect is being felt in many homes, the light is safe and clean, the flat iron keeps the worker busy to see it does not get too hot. the old way was to wait around for the iron to become fit to use: the toaster that may be placed on the table and be toasting while you eat; the warming pad, a great comfort to the sick as it maintains an even temperature when you

are resting by its warming influence, with no fear of waking, and finding the leakage and unpleasant sensation of a broken water bottle.

The fireless cooker that is being used with success, the washing machine, carpet sweeper and the trolley car that takes you to the city almost as soon as you care to go.

We are now advancing into the future, of which nothing can be said but from a visionary standpoint.

But is it not for the future the mind struggles to obtain knowledge, wealth or fame?

We will note for the RIVER the fact that it was, it is, and what reason have we to say that it will (not be) power of help to humanity in the year 1950 .

For fifty years the RIVER has been flowing in its channels, receiving moisture from the heavens, or mankind is not here to read this future, and note the changes

Having introduced this story of the RIVER of CONN. at the home of a fisher boy who lived beside the rapids, (that were, and are now buried in this beautiful inland lake) in this future of fifty years, it is only fair to look for another fisher boy that may inherit some of the fondness for the products of this waterway.

Where will I find that boy? well it is possible he will be extinct, but this is a magnificent lake and Grandfather said when writing this little book, that it would be the beauty spot of NEW ENGLAND.

The fishermen's homes are gone, the brook where the fishing parties used to haul the net is removed, the railroad has held its right of way but the cars of steel are passing every quarter hour, the smoke of the engine no more polutes the atmosphere, the long freights are only seen after dark, the riverboats of many styles are moving too and fro, this is no more the little country place, but a city called ENFIELD, into which the village of THOMPSONVILLE is absorbed.

Where there is room, factorys are built between the railroad and RIVER: while the pleasant homes along the hill sides on each side of the RIVER are free of all anoyance of the smoke and fumes that was a

past nuisance.

This we are observing from the CITY HOSPITAL, at River-view; the Island is no longer a woodlot, but there may be seen homes of the men who have care of the locks and power plant.

We will go to the bank of the lake and it is possible I may find a fisher boy. the docks along the shore is the place to look for him, yes he is here, and has a nice basket of fish, sure the school boy is just as fond of his fishing tackle as his Great Grandpa was before him, the school work is more elaborate, the Carnegie Library holds many items of history about this RIVER which the writer has left out of this work, about Indians, Emegrants, Wars,

Transportation by water, by rail, then the horseless carriage and truck, which made good roads necessary, the telegraph a back number if not for its wireless code, the telephone the most perfect little wonder for gossip, the trolley car that used to be so crowded when everybody wanted to go at the same time now is almost a continuous run with seating privileges for all; the hard fight for the improvement of the river it was a grafting scheme for a Washington lobby who did not care for its future usefulness, only acting the part of dog in the manger, me first, the devil take the rest of ye: those were called exciting times, but some good men were found that could and

did stand for the rights of mankind, thus the RIVER is our pride to day.

The boating is fine, the bathing places at the boating houses along the bank are a mark of comfort and neatness there are good fish to be had, the water is no longer foul with sewerage, and looking from the hill at what used to be called the lower falls, where the little steamer had its struggle years ago, is now constructed a beautiful dam across the RIVER, and the big Government Locks for the convenience of Navigation, to the west of the Island.

The big wheels and shafts that are receiving power from the RIVER, and sending it on wires below ground to thousands of homes, and many

factories.

Along the bank are pleasant drives, and artistic home surroundings.

The cities of Hartford and Springfield seem to have become as one continuous city with fine farms a supporting background, so well cared for that it looks like a beautiful garden extending back to the mountains on each side.

What of the grand old RIVER now? the fisher boy gets a good supply of fish, the athlete large opportunity for the boat racing, and superior facility for moving merchandise more than two hundred miles into the heart of New England.

Now the surroundings are pleasing, and as I have read a part of Grandpa's book, I

am wondering if he may not have in his mind the possibility of happier days, when all nations could devote a part of their time looking for such International Law, that it becomes policy to help to the happiness of mankind.

Home life may give me a part of the answer, being a stranger in these parts years how may I introduce myself

I will try the boy that has been catching some fish and watching me, while I have been lost in the pleasant surroundings

Hello! My young fisherman, Do you live in this pleasant community?

" Yes sir, not far from here on Abbey Street. say, Mr. you have been looking around the place the last half hour as if

you were lost.

Oh no, my boy, I used to live near here when there was only a few houses in this section, and some that were here are gone entirely; the water from the big dam has drowned them out of existence.

These homes look pretty from the outside and I would like to see them from the inside.

Well that can be done, Ma may know you, she's got a long list of names in one of her books, of the people who used to live about these parts and she claims to be one of the old settlers, as she always has lived near the river.

But you must not call her old, as she is only about forty; come on! here is where the boats come up from N. Y.

with fert.lizer, grain, flour, wire for the electric lines, machines for the mills, &c.

“Dont they bring coal?”

Yes, some for the power-house at the Dam, and to other power houses up the RIVER, to be used in case of water getting low.

This is my home, and here is Ma. This man came down to the dock where I was fishing, says he use d to live in this place years ago, and was so pleased w th the Lones on the outside, he asked if he could see one from the inside, and I asked him here.

Come in, Mr.--- Johnie what did you say is the name of the Gentleman ?

Beg your pardon for the intrusion my name is Stewart and I used to help my Fath-

er raise tobacco near here when a boy.

Well I declare! this must be Harold Stewart. often has my husband mentioned that name. my name was Allen when a girl, Buxton is my name by marriage, and my husband will be glad to see you, he will be home for dinner soon, he is Superintendent of that large factory over the river, where all kinds of fancy leather trimmings are made, he has a motor boat which is always ready to go on errands, or home to meals;

Take off your overcoat and have dinner with us, no excuse, its all ready.

May I look into your kitchen? I dont note any cooking stove here.

We have no kitchen and a

electric cooker is the way we get our cooking done, when not in use, it makes a very handy lounge. this is it, beside that window, the dinner is all ready to be put on the table, as you may soon see.

What ! No coal or gass ?

Not a bit of it, no dirt or dust, and this is because the water of the RIVER has been harnessed to secure this comfort, the refrigerator in that corner is governed in the same way, above are the attachments for light, or toaster, coffee maker to be used on the table, a socket in the floor to which a warming pad may be attached for cold feet, an electric radiator in each room, all we have to do now is prepare the meals, and as super-intendant, see the work

progress, in hot weather the fan drives out flies, and the washing ironing, churning, milking, and cultivating the garden, also stock manger is arranged that by pushing the button, they are fed, the poultry learn to feed themselves.

Mother says that everything is so much more easily kept clean than it used to be.

This is a fine day, and we expect some friends from the north to call in their new flying machine they sent us by wireless. that the weather being favorable, they would be with us in time for tea.

Ma says the fish from the RIVER are better than when she was a girl, before the water was made clean, and the big dam put up.

There was a big fight over

that sewerage problem, but the question came before the fish and game commission in this way: a fisherman puts a dose of poison in the stream to bring a few fish within his reach, he is arrested, in accord with the law of the land but the manufacturer disposes of his poison waste, without a care of damage done goes free in his work, as destroyer of a valuable food product.

It was a problem of much controversy, and it was the people combined in demanding all streams must be kept free from sewerage of all kind.

This caused much anxiety among the manufactures, until some one asked if the waste could be so conducted by state appropriation and

made into a paying plant, by developing the fertilizing part into improved vegetable growth of course this brought the Department of Agriculture to an earnest study of the situation.

It was discovered that this waste could be of benefit.

Here comes Mr. Buxton, that little boat of his is great for quick transit, we go to the seaside in it during our vacation, there is liberal cabin room, thus we do without hotel annoyance, changing at our ease from place to place.

If we wish to make (as it used to be remarked) a flying visit, a message to one of the flying machine stands, and as it requires a licenced man to go with these air-craft we get a very restful ride among the clouds.

This is Mr. Stewart, Mr. Buxton, he has returned from China, where the big tube is being constructed in the extension of the Under Ocean Railway which is soon to be finished, making a complete iron band around the world.

Well Stewart. its a long time since we met read your Grandfathers book, laughing at his construction of our future, but many changes that we can look back upon, take our smiles away and in the present knowledge tears are more appropriate, there has been improvements about the old fishing grounds since then, and think there is room for more.

Time does not wait, and we can get in a word while we feed our face, as we call-

ed it in our boyhood days.

Wife is getting fearful that we will forget the dinner she has hid in that case over near the window, the electric age is wonderful, but we grow old and need to be rationed as in the days of our ancestors.





